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MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT SUPPORTING MILITARY FAMILIES

Proposed Legislation Would Eliminate 90-Day OHIP Waiting Period for Military Families

OTTAWA – The McGuinty government intends to introduce legislation that, if passed, would ensure that OHIP eligible military families receive coverage for all provincially funded health services upon taking residence in Ontario, Phil McNeely, MPP for Ottawa-Orléans, announced today on behalf of Deputy Premier and Minister of Health and Long-Term Care George Smitherman.

"Military families deserve immediate access to high quality health care, and I am proud that one of the first actions of our government in our new term is to support military personnel and their families," said McNeely.

Most new Ontario residents have a 90 day waiting period for OHIP coverage. Approximately 26,000 Canadian Forces family members are currently living in Ontario. By providing immediate OHIP eligibility, up to 8,500 military family members per year could benefit from earlier access to Ontario's health care coverage.

"We want to welcome military families into our province with the promise that they won't have to wait for their OHIP coverage," said Smitherman. "I also want to thank Phil McNeely for his leadership in bringing this issue forward."

"In particular, military families coming to Ontario from Quebec face an additional burden because they often have to pay physician fees up front during the waiting period," said Smitherman. "The proposed legislation would remove this financial burden these families face when coming to Ontario."

The proposed legislation also contains amendments to *The Employment Standards Act, 2000* that would create job protection provisions for military reservists who are called to serve either at home or abroad.

To ensure fairness, the McGuinty government also plans to exempt athletes from military families from the one-year residency requirement of its Quest for Gold Ontario Athlete Assistance Program.

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